

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman John Olver announced that Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) was awarded a \$1,578,550 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor under the President's Community-Based Job Training Grants Initiative. The grant will be used to fund MWCC's Biotechnology/Biomanufacturing Partnership Project, a collaboration with Bristol-Myers Squibb.

The Biotechnology/Biomanufacturing Partnership will develop career ladders and curricula to link pre-employment, certificate, and associate's degree programs in biotechnology and biomanufacturing technology. Specifically, the Partnership will facilitate outreach programs in high schools and One-Stop Career Centers to expose youth and adults to career opportunities and will equip labs and hiring training faculty. This funding will support the training of approximately 190 students. The program will be based at MWCC's Devens campus.

"MWCC has identified a need - there are biotech firms out there in our area with high paying, entry level jobs that need trained workers. This funding will allow MWCC to fill that gap in the job market," Congressman John Olver said.

"This is a great economic boon to the region because we're helping to fuel Bristol-Myers Squibb's workforce," said MWCC President Daniel M. Asquino. "We greatly appreciate the continued support we receive for our initiatives, especially from Congressman Olver and also from Massachusetts' entire federal legislative delegation. This grant is extremely important for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and particularly for our region," Asquino said.

MWCC is one of 69 community colleges and community-based institutions that competed successfully to receive a total of \$125 million in grants and is the only Massachusetts organization selected in this third round of funding. Awardees were chosen from among 341 applications submitted in the third round of the competitive grant.

Employment in Massachusetts' biopharmaceutical industry is expected to grow by 64.3% in the decade ending in 2014. Approximately 300 biotech-related firms in Massachusetts currently

employ more than 30,000 workers. Eight percent of these workers are hired with an associate's degree credential. There is a need for 8,000 associate's degree workers to fill entry-level positions such production operators and lab personnel statewide. However, local community colleges face challenges in developing curriculum, acquiring lab equipment, and coordinating career information for dissemination.

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